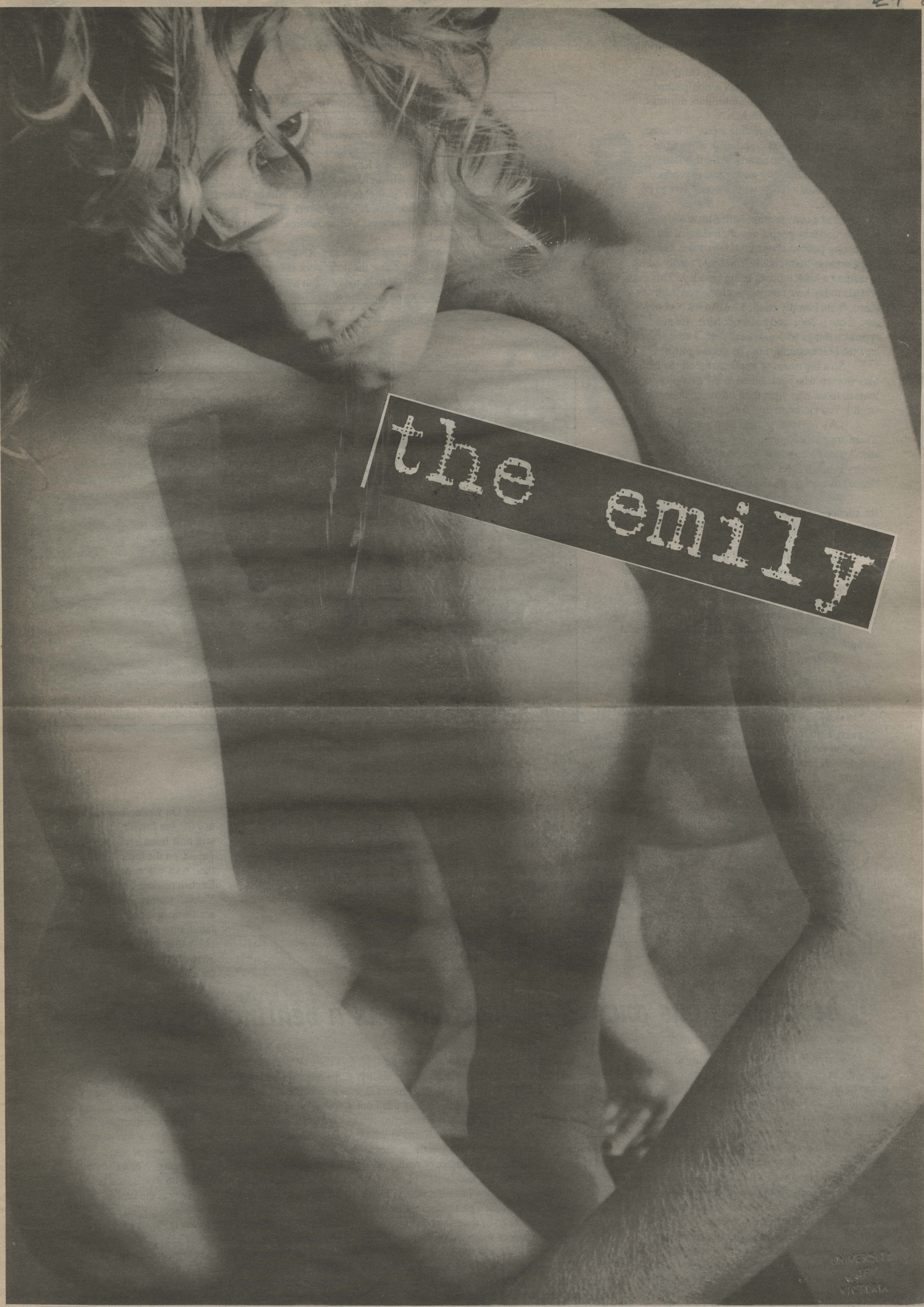


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the emily

volume 16 number 3  
february 1998





This is passion and creativity, emily style. We are pleased to bring you this action-packed paper, full to the brim with our brilliant musings. We be smart sassy chix, uh huh.

Passion is an interesting topic. It is something extremely personal, and difficult to write about. I couldn't write an article for this issue because I found it nearly impossible to produce words that could express what I would love to be able to share.

I had a conversation with Alison about passion, and how people are often shamed for expressing passion about anything. I was instantly transported to highschool. You could hardly admit to reading a book without being branded. This even persists today-how many times have you said, or heard, "ahh, I hardly studied." Like it's cool to not care about school, and not work hard, and not approach things with passion. Yeah, I know school isn't the best example, but you get the picture.

So a big round of applause for all the fabulous women who contributed to the passion issue. A toast to those who wear their hearts on their sleeves. (sigh.) You are brave and cool as ice.

Oh! And this is, like, such a good issue. There are a lot of words, and cramped pages, but we didn't want to leave anything out. Oh! And the poetry is good, and I say that as a person who doesn't like poetry unless contained in a pop song.

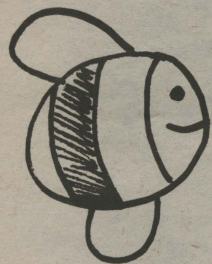
Read, enjoy, come and support *the emily* at the silent art auction and Valternative Groovefest on February 14th. (I hear there might be a kissing booth....)

Next issue is an Ain't I a Woman? That's the race, gender, and colonization issue. So get out your thinking caps and start writing. We love and admire all you contributors, so get on it! The due date for submissions is February 28th, plenty of time.

I hope your Groundhog day was as wonderful as mine

nicole

Jewish Feminist Irena Klepfisz  
\*Monday Feb 23, Debbie Yaffe's  
Jewish Feminist Thought course at  
6:30 on the topic of "Jewish Lesbians  
& Jewish Identity." ROOM: CLE  
A303



\*Tuesday Feb 24, she'll be  
giving a public lecture in  
BEGBIE 159, at 7:30, on the topic of  
"Secular Jewish Culture: Some  
Feminist Responses."

\*Wednesday noon Feb 25, the  
women's studies department will host  
a casual brown-bag seminar, where  
Irena will speak informally on what-  
ever issues are brought up. WOM-  
EN'S STUDIES READING ROOM,  
CLEARHUE B115

\* On Wednesday evening Feb 25  
at 7:30, the Jewish Community Centre  
will host Irena, speaking to the general  
public, on the topic "In  
their own voice: A bilingual Yiddish/  
English reading and discussion of  
Yiddish women's writing" for a non-  
academic audience, and with no  
familiarity with Yiddish required to  
enjoy the event. The Centre is at  
3636 Shelbourne Street. They may ask  
for a \$2 donation for refreshments.

## bee marvelous musing -- creativity as a healing process

For myself, creativity is the ability to create and/or the act of creating. In order to create, there has to be an engagement with myself, an attention to my thoughts, and an attunement with my imagination. To be creative I have to trust myself. It is getting to that free place — doing without inhibitions or expectations. It is in this space that renewal is possible. By removing expectations, other possibilities become open. If I am drawing a picture of the ocean, it is realizing that I do not have to see in any particular way. If I want the water to be orange, it will be orange. In this free space, there is opportunity to envision a different reality for myself, where meaning is generated out of my own specific context. When creativity is used to alter my reality or to establish a specific way of seeing that is positive, healing takes place.

Creativity also allows me to bring to the surface deep emotions such as pain, anger, and shame. Relieving the pressure that these emotions place on my mind is crucial. Once they have come out, they can be explored and made sense of. From there, it is possible to move towards creating positive images of myself. It is in the creation of these positive images that healing takes place.

When I write a poem, I am transferring images into language, sorting or ordering my reality. I am taking my thoughts that are running around in my head and transferring them out. Getting them out prevents them from poisoning me and rendering me less, less effective, less present, less. (Bartky) When they are exposed on the page, I can examine them, and change their effect on my image of reality or myself. I do this by judging the validity of my thoughts or emotions. When I transfer images into words, I can realize where a particular feeling came from, and perhaps let go of that. Once I have changed the meaning of those words, a space clears in my head.

Writing allows me to reaffirm my reality and sense of self. It enables me to construct a way to understand that which I experience. I learn — by examining my emotions and experience in my own language. It helps me to create sense in my world. Writing centers me in myself — it is a way of keeping my voice alive. It allows me the power to define myself, my own reality. Seeing my words on paper acts as validation for my reality.

Writing in my journal also allows me to see patterns within my thoughts. Whenever I feel upset or confused, I write in my journal. This allows me to pinpoint certain reoccurring themes in my life. Writing out these negative or confusing thoughts also clears my mind.

Writing allows me to move beyond into a more positive way of being or seeing. When I write a poem, I am healing my body with words, and the images that they create. Creativity is the process of bringing the body closer to wholeness. With each creative act, I am creating a new reality for myself. I am replacing negative words or images with positive words and images. Being whole means having a mind clear, or clearer, of negativity. With the space created in a clear mind, I can then listen to the direction my spirit gives me. My mind can move into my heart center, and there be unified with my body and spirit.

Works Cited  
Bartky, Sandra Lee. *Femininity and Domination*.  
New York: Routledge





groovefest!

three



The 2nd Annual

# Valternative ♥ groove fest

Have you been waiting for the Grand Poobah Party of the school year? Well kids, the time has come and the fun will shake your booty like it has never been shook before. The 2nd Annual Valternative Groovefest, Anti-Fashion show, and silent art auction is coming up and it's the best way to spend your Valentine's day. This event challenges malestream perspectives and directives on body image, homophobia, racism, ableism, as well as celebrating and affirming diverse groups of peoples who fall outside of, or are opposed by the malestream.

Not only do you get to participate in the biggest party but also ALL proceeds go to good causes. Fifty percent of the money raised will be split up to support the UVSS Women's centre, UVSS Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Alliance, the Women of Colour Collective, and the Capital Region Race Relations Association. The other 50%

goes toward The Women of our People Native Women's Sexual Assault Centre. This organization assists First Nations women in dealing with domestic violence, sexual assault, and court accompaniment, on or off reserve, status or non-status. Funds raised will be directed to healing work with clients.

As well as the Groovefest and wonderfully fabulous Anti-fashion show, *the emily* will be hosting an all-ages coffeehouse and the silent art auction. It will be free to get in, but if you can spare a donation it will be greatly appreciated. All proceeds from the Art Auction will go to this fine paper which you are currently enjoying. This event will most certainly be more than double the fun of a barrel of monkeys on crack.

by Mookie Wilson



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14 @ **VERTIGO**

Doors @ 9:00, show @ 10:00

Drink Specials! Door Prizes!

(This is a licensed event; ID Mandatory)

In the University of Victoria Student's Union Building

Tix \$5 in advance, \$6 @ the door

Available @ FunkyTown & Inner City

Or Call 721-8353

All Proceeds Benefit The Women Of our People Native Women's Sexual Assault Centre, the C.R.R.R.A. (Race Relations), the UVSS Women of Colour Collective, The Women's Centre, & the LGBA.

Hey gals, the UVSS Women's Centre is looking for you! Why? Because there's lots of fun to be had and work to do. Over the next couple of months we are planning events around International Women's Day/Week (March 8), the Week for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 18 - 23), the Lesbian and Allies Walk (February 11), on-going anti-racism, anti-oppression initiatives, and more.

Educating, invigorating, networking, and generally having some fun and raising hell are all on the agenda at the Centre. Volunteers are needed to help organize events, run the office, organize the New and Improved (lots-o-new books!) Library and Resource Centre, and more. Just stop by or call the Women's Centre to find out when we meet. We are located in the Students Union Building, B107, 721-8353, Email wcentre@uvic.ca.

Do you need a place to hold a meeting, start a support group, have lunch and hangout, make a cup of tea, relax, show a video? The Centre is available to women for all kinds of events. What we do is up to you!

## WISE

WISE is not only a great acronym, but also a relatively new group on campus that is interested in issues related to women in engineering and science. We started in September 1996, primarily as a social and networking group. The original group has expanded, taking on new projects and encompassing more people from various faculties.

WISE is open to everyone who cares about issues related to women in science and engineering. These include the low numbers of women in science and engineering, creating comfortable work and school environments, encouraging young women to pursue science and engineering, as well as balancing a career and the rest of life. We want to raise awareness of these issues, provide a sense of community and support people interested in starting projects.

Here's a brief list of previous WISE events and projects:

- lunches and get-togethers
- a panel discussion on "Career Issues in Science and Engineering" featuring women from UVic and local industry
- a mentor program
- visits of local high schools to make students aware of the possibilities of careers in science and engineering.

We meet on last Monday of every month at 6pm in GSS 108. We welcome you to drop by our meeting and find out more!

Elise Fear, Ph.D. student in Electrical Engineering

- Mookie SAYS...
- "Ouch. Leather gets hot in the sun."

### To All Students of Colour, and their Allies

The Students of Colour/Women of Colour organizations currently have club status at the University of Victoria. A motion has been put forward for them to become a constituency group alongside the Women's Centre, the LGBA, and the Society for Students with a Disability. This motion will be voted on at the Special Annual General Meeting. Please come out, bring your friends, and show your support for the students of colour by voting for the proposed motion. The Special Annual General Meeting is February 12, 1998 at 12pm. Be there, show support!

Okay. So we had dis much xtra room so I thought I'd give voice to one of my rants. After all, we are an activist zine of sorts, so....I'd like everyone out there to start carrying magic markers as a main accessory. The bathroom walls are trës boring this year- I miss the old comment-strewn stalls! please please please... Speak Out.





# The First Encounter

An excerpt from a work in progress, "A Nightingale's song"  
by Shehani Kay

When I saw the blood stain on his pink silk shirt, I didn't think it came from me. I lay there naked under crumpled sheets listening to the voices outside the door, wondering what kind of guy wore a pink silk shirt anyway. I was both disappointed and relieved with my first encounter. Disappointed that while our naked bodies, lost in the darkness, groped each other, intercourse was uncomfortable and unpleasurable. Relieved that while the finale of my virginity didn't measure up to my expectations, it was over and would only get better from now onwards. At least, that's what I hoped.

"Did you have an orgasm?" he asked, a little unsure of himself.

"No" I said calmly.

"Hmmm, girls always have orgasms with me" he replied thinking pensively like a scientist would when wondering why an experiment had failed. Finally after much deliberation, he concluded, "There must be something wrong with you," putting the blame firmly on me without any judgment on his performance or consideration that virgins don't usually have orgasms.

I lay silently thinking that perhaps he was right. In every sex scene I'd seen on T. V and in the movies, sex seemed like a most pleasurable experience. If it were not, no one would bother partaking in the act, I wouldn't be here, and we wouldn't have an overpopulation problem in the world. So I concluded that it must just be me. When I was in my pre-teens I would lie in the shower, let the stream of water beat down on my genitals and fantasize that my lover was both baffled and tenacious in his attempt to bring me to orgasm—he would diligently persist in thrusting until I finally shook in a release of pent-up pleasure. Most times, the water would be stone cold by the time I finished. Sometimes, I wouldn't finish at all and I would have to crawl out of my tub in frustration freezing from the sharp cold water that left me numb. I guess, it would seem, my fantasy had become a reality and here I was with a lover who was no where near as

persistent as my fantasy lover was. Actually, I was rather glad that the whole encounter only lasted about a minute. It spared me from prolonged discomfort and pain.

After a short discourse on how blood got on his brand new pink silk shirt, that transgressed as follows:

"Damn! How did that blood get on there?"

"I dunno. It wasn't me. I was no where near your shirt."

"Well, how else would it have gotten there?"

"Hmmm...Don't know."

He left the room to find a clean shirt to wear. While I was getting dressed, I ran my hands across my breasts and hips, hoping to feel a subtle change—a more voluptuous, mature, post-virginal body. Everything, unfortunately, was in its place and I felt very much the same. I remember watching my first porno when I was younger. It one of those French dubbed in English—mouth and words aren't synchronized—type of porn. The movie documented the life of a virgin girl to sexual woman. After her first real sexual experience, this woman began to notice a transformation of her young body. She would lie in bed, surrounded by her tousled sheets, masturbating, marveling on how her body was transforming from sexual activity into a voluptuous, sexy statue of flesh. I felt my breasts again, as if to ensure I didn't miss anything during the first examination. No, nothing, the second examination proved fruitless. Nothing on my surface was different.

When I rejoined the party outside, I was tremendously conscious of my outward appearance. Did I look different? Radiant? Sexy? If I did, no one seemed to notice.

"Happy 16th Birthday Lessette!" cried a friend of mine, hugging me.

"Hm" I thought "A happy birthday indeed."

The next time my pink silk shirt boyfriend and I were alone, we wasted no time in talking. The sacred

barrier that once kept us at a distance enough to talk about nothing, had been broken and now nothing seemed important enough to talk about. I was freshly sixteen and thought that he loved me. What's more important is that I thought I loved him too. Even after a week of knowing each other, our bond seemed significant. It was the bond that I'd been waiting for. The bond, the sanctity that gave me permission to abandon my chastity and partake in carnal joys. The problem was it wasn't joyful, or at least it wasn't a joy with him. The first time his lips touched me between my legs, I thought I'd feel an immense surge of passion envelop my body, my stomach muscles would tighten up, and I would gasp with pleasure. Kiss, kiss, poke, kiss, kiss, poke, poke. His kisses were like pecks you'd give your grandmother on Sundays and his fingers were awkward, uncomfortable, even absurd. Is this it? I asked myself. I was under the impression that this was one of the most pleasurable acts a woman could experience. Kiss, kiss, poke, poke. I began to daydream about my first slow dance with a boy. I was eleven years old and he was a thirteen year old friend of a friend of my older brother. Corey Collins was his name, and we swayed lost in a trance to "When Dove's Cry" by Prince in a dark, musty basement. Kiss, kiss, poke, poke. I could feel his warm breath in my hair and his chest was pressed up against mine. He was the first boy outside of my family I'd ever been this close to in a prolonged embrace. I remember feeling tingling in my pelvis and hips, and an uncontrollable urge to push forward overwhelmed me. But alas, once the song ended we separated with such awkward ease it hurt. Kiss, kiss, poke, poke. I sighed in sadness, longing for those lost innocent moments.

"Did you have an orgasm?" The pink silk shirt boy asked, mistaking my sigh as a sign of contentment and release.

"No" I replied a little irritated.

"I swear there must be something wrong with you!" he shot back defensively, unable to fathom why his great talent was being so under appreciated by the likes of me.

A week later he left me for his tall, blond, 14 year old ex-girlfriend, who apparently fully appreciated his sexual prowess. I was abandoned, betrayed and more than a little dizzy with grief. It was to be the first and last time I was to feel my heart ache so immensely from sadness. The terrible and tenacious pain sheared through the fabric of my being, ricocheted in my mind and left me reduced to a mound of sobbing flesh standing at the edge of a canyon waterfall—water rushed by my feet and I was unable to resist the rapid current pulling me down into the abyss below.

## ESSENTIAL THINGS

She has to do it "her own self". So I watch her struggle with each scoop of sand, placing it with unnecessary meticulousness on the mound and packing it down with measured, even pats. On the left Grandpa pushes the stroller and wipes her snot first with a shredded Kleenex and then with the famous red hankie that he'll never give up. Times have changed.

But not the essential things. Suddenly I am small and stout, battling not with disobedient clumps of wet sand but with the butterflies who will not surrender themselves to my fat, sticky hands. Dazzled by them — flashes of paradoxical color in the prairie grain ocean — I stumble backwards with shrieking glee, cushioned by those waves. Following their flight in ecstasy and terrible envy. I want to fly too, Mommy.

The same need for patent leather shoes, for mud pies, for important illusory battles over unseen territory, for all things shiny. A penny is a treasure. The luxury of crying lustily when pain or fear is present, and sometimes even when it is not, just to have the reassurance of older and stronger hands; a soothing, gravelly voice. Someone cares. Even when they know you are faking it.

I am five and the seaweed isn't seaweed yet. It is serpents, once hissing and menacing, but lifeless now from the mighty thrusts of my sword. Don't touch that rock. It is a sacred vessel bound for the island of Teragram (someone's best friend's name spelled backwards). I'm not putting it down. It's not a dirty stick. It's my secret wand, my only means of entering Teragram and the source of my magic. So I can too, bring it in the house.

I don't want her to grow up. Even if high heels and girdles don't exist anymore to push her upwards and forwards and inwards, in the latest fashionable contortion. Even if she should want to

be pushed for a while. Let her keep stained smocks and scabby knees that are fun to pick: scars are still a sign of bravery or delectably gross incidents, fun to relate.

Keep calling the boys stupid heads; retain that simple arrogance that you are better simply because you are you. Keep the thrill of discovery — of funny belly buttons and of your twin because you are wearing the same clothes today. Identity can't be threatened because it is irrelevant. You are the world and the world is in you.

I've had small wizards of my own. They ate well and can multiply. But against the better wishes of the older and wiser, have kept their wands and sacred vessels. They are the better for it. And I've kept mine all of these years. Sometimes they lie neglected, and when sadness pervades, I know I have forgotten that I am not really a mortal but an ancient sorceress. Then I regain bliss, when I realize pain is the real illusion and something meek and powerless in the wake of my wand.

Don't forget your magic, little hands. Don't forget the beauty of imperfection — of lopsided sand castles and depictions of purpledogs (even if someone tells you there are no purple dogs). And when pushed and pulled in new directions, don't forget that growing upwards makes for an imposing monument, but a tree that grows just a bit to the side makes for a comfortable sitting-and-dreaming place. Somewhere to remember endless battles and heroic feats, tasty mud feasts, days that flowed into an endless seam of delight.

Don't forget the pure joy of just being, of offering yourself to the winds for today, and soaring above the remembered and forgotten, to your home in the here and now. This is the real you.

Alyson Thomson







## Sexing Creativity

My friend Caroline and I were chatting over a couple of drinks and the topic turned to writing. I am a self-confessed obsessive writer, so I was probably talking about one of my writing courses, or poetry, or journal-keeping or whatever, when she remarked that she hadn't written since she had sex. Misunderstanding her, I snidely asked how long it had been. Then she said that she hadn't written since she first had sex, years previous. As a person who cannot survive without a pen and paper, I was dumbfounded. Caroline's response struck me as a revelation might, and I thus embarked on a mission to find out if there could be a possible link between sexuality and creativity.

When Caroline revealed her current, post-virginity writing-hindered state, I immediately thought that there had to be a connection. Now, after reflecting on the subject for awhile, I am not so sure, but I do believe that our sexual and creative lives feed each other in a positive way. I still don't know exactly why Caroline stopped writing so suddenly. I came up with a few possibilities: first, that because she was raised in an extremely strict household, she was afraid of being 'found out'. Or perhaps it was a new lack of time or energy or desire to reflect inwards? Subconscious guilt? I think back to a time in my childhood when I had this immense crush on a boy - I would write our names in hearts or compose love letters or erotic thoughts which I would inevitably destroy the next day, embarrassed to admit desire. Some of us

are still in that childhood state of embarrassment at our sexualities. To write or paint or sing about our so-called perverted desires is something of a taboo, or at least causes a blush.

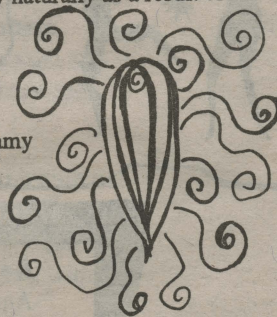
Looking at my own life, I found some possibly revealing things. Up until recently my creative life has been composed mainly of writing. This is still mostly the case, but when I seriously began to explore my sexuality, I found that I began moving towards other forms of creativity. When I met my current lover, I began to draw and paint profusely. My journal, one dominated by handwriting, now is filled with impromptu drawings and sketches (my favorite doodle is the magical vagina). When it comes down to it, sex is an amazingly powerful force in people's lives, for those who harness the energy. Writers, for example, have written about love and sex as far back as we have been lucky enough to retain their writings. Much of the earliest visual art is of an erotic nature. And in music, well, singing about our objects of desire is almost a cliché, though it will never go out of style.

What is it about our sexualities that moves us to create? Even though it seems that our natural responses to sexuality are repressed from an early age (especially in females), we often find ourselves inspired by love or lust. Unfortunately, we are taught that it is perverse, or strange to celebrate our sexualities. It often takes many years to embrace our inner, natural sexualities before we can start to celebrate them. Exploring your feelings towards sex, and especially, your own sexual nature is an ongoing process. It can be extremely interesting and rewarding, and dare I say, entertaining. You may find yourself having the urge to create, even if you've never considered yourself a creative person. Remember, we are all artists. Of

course, as an added bonus, the more you explore your creative self, the more your sex life will benefit. The best lovers are usually those who have an active creative life, even if that creative life means dancing around the house to showtunes naked or painting little goblin soldiers and having wars on the kitchen table. (This is a proven fact. Well, proven by me.) If you need a little inspiration, pick up Succulent Wild Woman by SARK, a marvelous and fresh little book containing some great advice on living creatively, anecdotes, and even a page dedicated as an ode to vibrators. Pick up some erotic literature and examine how you respond to the stories (I love The Delta of Venus by Anais Nin. Tara Lindsay recommends the Herotica series as a good starting dish. See her for more suggestions). Or, and this is my favorite: write your own. You are a wealth of ideas, plus you know what you like (well, you didn't spend all those nights/days fantasizing for nothing, did you? Well, it wasn't exactly nothing then either. . .). Visit a sex shop. Unfortunately Victoria is sadly lacking in quality sex shops, so pick up a Womyn's Ware catalogue or plan a weekend trip to Vancouver to go on a sex-toy-buying spree. You don't need a partner to explore your creative self. Please try this at home! Finally, in the words of a wise woman (my mom), if you maintain a happy and healthy relationship with your sexuality, creativity seems to flow naturally as a result of satisfaction.

Have fun!

Andrea Bellamy



## Alternative Stress Therapy

by Liz G.

After a long stressful day at school, you take off your shoes, put your feet up and settle down for a relaxing orgasm. What? What about a cup of sunset almond tea or a box of chocolates. No, to relax the nineties a woman needs her own vibrator. Tacky, you might think. Rude, you might squawk. Right on, you might say. The vibrator may just hold the key to guarantee a woman's good health and sense of well being.

The world of sex toys with its pouting, scantily clad, silicone implanted babes may seem like a domain reserved for adolescent males and perverts. However, the vibrator is an essential womyn's tool. An orgasm functions much like laughter, it's uncontrollable and it makes us feel good. So how about a completely selfish orgasm when you want it, with little effort, no attachment, no guilt, no need to think about birth control and best of all, no worries about STDs.

Of course there is the social stigmatism attached to owning a vibrator: good girls don't own them, only sluts do. Yeah, well good girls don't have sex and they certainly don't masturbate. And Barbie is probably the only good girl around, but she doesn't really count 'cause she's just a hard body.

Further therapeutic aspects of owning a vibrator fall into the relationship maintenance category. If your lover is away and you're feeling in the mood, and that cute guy or gal is tempting you just a little too much... Get our your electric friend and you'll forget all about that other sweet dish and the infidelity you were about to commit.

Your battery powered playmate is bound to make your life more exciting. You're settled in the plane, home bound for the holidays when your name is broadcast over the speakers. You identify yourself and the steward escorts you onto the tarmac to an iron trolley full of luggage and a stern customs inspector. The inspector asks you to identify your luggage. When you ask why the inspector replies that a suspicious oblong electrical apparatus appeared on the x-ray. You look the custom's inspector straight in the eye and say nonchalantly, "Oh, that. That's my vibrator." Sexual liberation never felt so good.

## RIPE (Grocery Store Erotica) by Anna Swanson

She had been standing in the produce section, idly fingering the avocados for much too long. They were hard and wouldn't be ripe for days, but her mind was in other places. She was ripe now. Surely anyone who would bother to finger her flesh would know that. If only they knew, they wouldn't be so smug about grabbing everything as if they didn't feel the skin barely containing the sweet insides, wouldn't be so confident that everything around them wasn't about to explode, or split open or burst with one misplaced fingernail. If only they knew, they wouldn't go around grabbing fruits and vegetables as if they weren't even grabbing at all. And no one was grabbing her. Ripe as she was. So ripe that not to eat her before paying in the line-up would truly be a crime, not to bite in and send juice flying onto the cashier, the floor....

Whoops, she had a feeling she was starting too look conspicuous but she was much too distracted to be an efficient shopper at this point. Okay, keep moving, look busy, she repeated to herself as a mantra of sorts, trying to calm herself as she walked past squashes, out of the question, carrots, keep walking, cucumbers, don't even look, zucchinis, god wasn't there any unfuckable food in this section? And then finally the rounder vegetables. Yes, maybe she'd just grab some tomatoes and onions and make a sandwich tonight and deal with the rest of the shopping later. Tomatoes. That would be safe, she thought as she reached down and started feeling for a ripe one, pressing fingers lightly against the skin, the skin so delicate that the smallest spasm of thumb pushing would bring that juice bursting to the surface, thumbs pushing through skin, skin parting, juice rising, hands clenching....

Hmmmm, perhaps tomatoes weren't the smartest after all, she strategized as she opened her eyes and looked around with a slight apprehension, hoping she was still playing the part of the casual shopper. Maybe it would be better to leave the produce section all together. Yes, good move, she congratulated herself as she walked out, but even

though she kept her eyes pinned forward she couldn't miss the smell of mangos and peaches and papayas and those other juicy, slippery, dripping, oh....

Keep moving, don't look, don't think. It's a damn good thing you don't have to feel cans to see if they're ripe. In fact, she realized, cans were perfect. No smell, no possibility of biting into them and even if I inadvertently grab one as hard as I can, I don't think I'm strong enough to bust it. Right - onwards to the canned goods. Peas, beans, corn, okay, good, don't look behind you, tomato soup, minestrone, beef stock, don't look at the jam behind you, chick peas, lentils, lima beans, don't even think about the jam behind you, whole tomatoes, crushed tomatoes, anything but the jam because as soon as you start remembering the summer canning you're toast, hands pinned above your head, held by her boots as you lay on the floor, your tank-top pulled up over your face so you couldn't see when the hot syrup of peach jam would hit your nipples, your neck as she slowly dripped it from above, laughing, slowly dripping, laughing....

Oh my god, she thought, startled, as she opened her eyes and unclenched her hands from the sides of her pants, how long have I been standing here staring up at the Liza's Homemade Jam display? This aisle was definitely a mistake, she told herself as she hurried around shopping carts and middle aged women who were careful to avert their eyes. If she wasn't careful she might be found in a puddle on the deserted floor by the late night janitor. She needed to cool down, and quick.

Seeing as she couldn't take a cold shower in a grocery store, she headed at full speed for the freezer section. Surely frozen peas couldn't make things any worse. She felt the cold rush of air as she entered the aisle. Good, she was starting to feel steadier already. She went right to the frozen peas, grabbed a bag and held onto it tightly as she steadied her breathing and tried not to think. The coldness was working; this was good. Her breathing slowed

and soon she felt calm enough to open her eyes and look around. Frozen peas would make an excellent dinner. And as soon as she made it home she could deal with her traitorous hormones in the comfort of her own room, or bathroom or the tiled kitchen floor or...No, don't go there. Frozen peas, frozen peas, breathe, frozen peas. Repeating this out loud to herself, she somehow made it up to the cashier. By this point she didn't care anymore who stared at her and was actually thankful for the path that miraculously seemed to clear through the aisle. Just pay and leave, frozen peas, don't stare at the undone button in the middle of the cashier's blouse, frozen peas, frozen peas, don't think, frozen peas. It had a certain rhythm to it which kept her going through the tediousness of price-checks and credit card verifications and do you have airmiles Ma'am and.... god could this line-up be moving any slower?

She wasn't sure how much longer she could take it. The cashier was teasing the tomatoes with a light touch when anyone could tell that they were screaming to be pinched and bruised; the man in front of her was absentmindedly rubbing a thumb in insistent circles on the lid of Liza's triple-fruit jam. When she could no longer stand to watch people holding and handling their food with complete disregard for her delicate state, she shut her eyes and waited. After a second, the din of footsteps, squeaky carts and small talk faded. In a forest, this would have been the moment she stopped walking and finally the hum of bees in the sun or the high pitched whir of cicadas at dusk. But here in the urban wilderness, new sounds offered themselves to her: She could hear the raspy sound of tomato skins rubbing each other raw, metal straining as the pressure built in soup cans everywhere, sweet peas sighing open, grapes slowly splitting one by one like seams, carrots remembering that gasp of sweet terror *that comes to* as they were pulled roughly *will that be all ma'am?* from the moist earth again *are. . . you alright ma'am* and again and again and again.





**Georgia O'Keeffe**  
Lisa Hebden

Georgia O'Keeffe stands  
with her back to the window.  
The New York night  
brushes her flesh as she bends  
touches the poppy  
between her legs,  
feels its plump ribbons,  
its negative spaces.  
Light as hair her fingers sift  
petal upon petal  
probing for a new image.  
She closes her eyes,  
listens to the traffic below,  
the slow throbbing  
of the moon inside her.  
Her hands move quickly  
to the easel. She smears  
alizarin crimson, violet  
outlines her gender in black.  
An unapologetic slit divides  
the darkness.  
She steps back. Finally,  
a woman on paper.

**end of october beginning of november**  
G

come to me  
i whisper over the  
travelled paths of flight  
i send these vibrations  
floating on panes of glass  
they reach him  
but have not filtered through

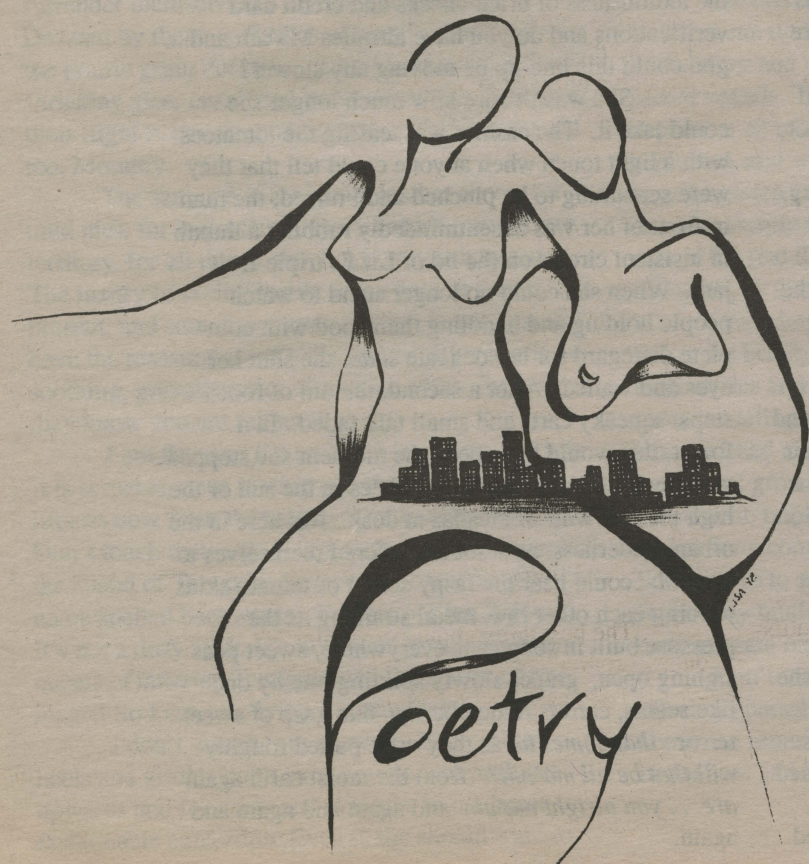
**Ruah**  
Kirsten Holkestad

First, the bay blew calm.  
She sat in her sounds, bobbing for light,  
an ornament coloured by pitch, dives down  
without rupture, crisp instrument to smooth.

Down drapes of sea-ropes and tunnels,  
I remember rudimentary worlds, in my hand  
a silk snail, rolls of ribbon through the cochlea.  
My hair in brown flags, casts endless  
undulations, pools of exposed shores.

I wear ruby rocks, these safety lobes, robes  
of rich song, easy fixtures press into sand  
like keys, small organs  
thrustured through the body.

The beach heaves its breath, briny extract of blood,  
and the born, crowned in sound  
herald to a dream.  
Wet whales on pebbles  
shift closer.



# poetry

# six

## Creed of One Woman

I taste your breath,  
I drink your essence,

I want your presence to undo my  
rules.

Cause anarchy in my body and  
disobedience in my soul

overturn my spirit,  
execute my inhibitions,  
drug my mind with  
your liquor

And when I am satisfied,  
and my embers cool,

Respect my mind, and  
Honor my rules.

-Lydia Del Bianco



## Shirt Collar

Your small breasts press out,  
unexpected under this shirt collar,  
the starched fold  
meeting itself over your collar-bone.

This is the place your shoulders leave from,  
easing back, at last,  
as if the world had room for them,  
as if your skin fit differently  
under this shirt.

For you I would learn  
the forgotten motions of my father's hands,  
the foreign ritual of folding a tie  
in on itself, anything  
for an excuse to reach my hands  
behind your neck,  
slide my fingers up under your shirt collar,  
that sharp cool crease.

Anna Swanson

## dark dear heart \*

a woman is told a woman tells her do not do anything you  
do not want to do this seems simple, as necessary as  
mastering a zippo with one hand, two fluid movements  
she agrees with simplicity, it suits her okay she says,  
simple

simple as spreading molasses over cashew butter,  
coaxing it to the corners, so it lies flat, the corners of the  
torso on the floor, maintaining crisp lines throughout the  
asana, she concentrates, her corners click into alignment,  
fill with light, illuminate her dark dear heart her ribs paper  
lanterns flammable

she panics thoughts slide inside, bunch up in her left  
buttock, right shoulder, she becomes a diagonal line, an  
arrow, she has forgotten her own shape she stays  
although she is tired she tells herself i am being  
squeezed her point pierces the woman the lover's flesh  
air charged with arrow words

perhaps this is not so simple she sees sweet dark drops  
on her fingers spilled she knows which words weigh the  
most words placed in her lover's pocket sink she is not  
willing to share scared stare as she stones the woman, then  
tries to stop, soothe the woman's sticky arms around her  
waist

simple she repeats after her i will not throw my stones,  
they are for baking only do what i want simple simple  
as stilling the mind with the breath

-brenda simmers

\*title taken from holly cole's latest album, dear dark heart

## Rain

Anna Isaacs

Write about rain  
it's raining right now  
Big Gobs of H<sub>2</sub>O  
spluttering against the glass panes

But we are dry  
so long as windows don't leak and roofs don't collapse  
So long as it is without  
and we are within

On occasion I wonder if all this avoidance  
leaves us unwatered  
Perhaps galoshes umbrellas slickers and awnings  
are secretly leading to our demise

The drought stricken masses perishing  
of inadequate exposure to raindrops  
But don't be silly  
we are cactuses not waterlillies

## Spring Cleaning

Anna Isaacs

*The sensation is delightfully  
unique.  
tickle breeze pull  
Sucking on her toes with the vacuum  
reminds her of her youth  
when she discovered the sensation  
for the first.  
To be fresh and unwritten  
To have a world waiting full of never before  
before her  
she finds no more desirable than a world of before  
behind.  
but it is different  
And she reflects on the difference  
and smiles to remember  
being new*

## day of spirits

G

**blessed be  
i whisper  
blessed be to all the nature spirits  
as i wind my way through the trees  
and look beyond the sea and skies  
i see  
myself as a celtic womyn  
a speaker in her own muse  
celtic pagan  
touching the earth with blessings  
i float in nature  
and i wait to meet him on my journey  
may i travel light**

oct 13 97

G

i pretend i travel  
Ireland  
meeting goddess places of  
rebirth  
female caverns of spirit  
waiting to be  
touched by  
my  
awareness

## Delicacy

Lisa Hebden

*I dreamed I was running  
in the glow of the sliced-apple moon  
my skin hot as chocolate.*

*There were women running beside me  
holding their skirts above their waists  
tasting the night with their thighs.*

*I dreamed we picked the moon  
pulled it ripe from that huge sky  
and when I awoke  
I could taste its brightness.*

## the healing aleahg

you talk to me about the articulation  
about spreading the mud all over your saintly body  
rubbing it over your nipples  
and into the place that i call heaven.  
you rub the mud unto your body  
creating patterns where once his hands had been

there was no victory on this day only self-preservation  
and I know this because I have been there once too  
spread the mud all over my body  
and I cried in ecstasy when I was done.



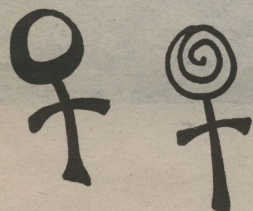


## A Book Review (and then some) No Previous Experience: A Memoir of Love and Change Elspeth Cameron. Viking 1997

review by Lynne Risk

I had first read about Elspeth Cameron and her autobiographical narrative of a woman who finds her true love not only later in life, but (shock of shocks) with another woman in *Saturday* magazine. I was instantly hooked, and eventually bought her book. *No Previous Experience* documents Cameron's life as a renowned Canadian biographer and tenured prof at the University of Toronto, her abusive relationship with her asshole husband (also a professor at UofT), and the four year span in which she meets and falls in love with University of Calgary professor Janice Dicken (not surprising... that killer Calgary charm goes a long way dontcha know). A self described "thinking man's Barbie doll" (which in itself is pathetic...I had always thought/hoped that the real "thinking man" would be down with the whole egalitarian thing, but whatever), Cameron finds new strength and independence and POWER from her friendship and later her romance with Dickin. And really, thank some higher power for that because from Cameron's account, her husband was the most conniving, spiteful, manipulative, and mysonginistic fucker you could imagine. After being introduced to some fundamental feminist philosophies (thanks largely to Janice ofcourse) Elspeth began to recognise her husband's mind fucks, his violent temper and need his for control for what they really were-the irrational behaviour of a small, scared, insecure wee little man.

One of the things that really stuck in my mind while I read this book was how much it needed to be on the bookshelf of every narrow minded right-winger who thinks that all heterosexual love is healthy and good and that any homosexual love is evil and sinful. In a beautifully written memoir Cameron, I think, completely dispels that notion. Her experiences are exactly what learning and self discovery and love really are all about. In her life with Paul (the asshole husband), she was part of the socially acceptable hetero-married couple who had kids and a nice house and boring as piss dinner parties with all of their other little couple friends. Privately though, she suffered from random beatings, almost constant verbal abuse, a massive inferiority complex, and a warped idea of love.



## Irene Jackson: Singing Her Life

by Alison Anderson

Local folk musician Irene Jackson has been composing as long as she can remember. She started with songs composed as she performed them at age five for her mother, and carried on, humming counterparts to her one-finger chords when a few years later her parents bought her a guitar from Sears. She recalls a dream she had about a guitar, wanting one "like it was a date - it was a real drive". Inspiration for her songs comes from personal experience, as well as reading and listening to other people's music. Shawn Colvin's music currently inspires her to go in new directions in composing. She likes to "say something common in an uncommon way" and to sing lyrics that feel fun to say. She finds that performing rounds off the edges of her songs - songs get worn in as they age.

Irene has played at folk clubs, festivals, coffeehouses and TV telethons. She teaches guitar lessons and writes music beds (the theme music and filler) for CHEK TV shows. Her songs are also starting to get American radio play. She focusses now on solo writing and performing, but eventually will probably collaborate, writing with and for other artists.

When she met Janice, she discovered someone who was amazingly intelligent, funny, challenging, and someone who deeply respected and admired her also. Theirs was a meeting of (two brilliant) minds and souls, and eventually bodies. Instead of being built on fear and guilt and forced expectations, their love was built on trust, mutual respect and admiration, and equality. And of no small importance, Cameron had a much more empowering and fulfilling sexual relationship with Janice than she ever did with Paul (like that would be hard at any stretch though...he wanted to pee on her...how that's erotic I totally don't understand, but whatever). I'm not meaning to twist Cameron's memoir into some argument that says all heterosexual relationships are doomed to be nasty, awful power struggles and mind games and that all homosexual love is a one way ticket to paradise (I could write a whole other article about that...). If nothing else, I learned this past year that is so not true-not all men are my enemies just as not all women are my soul sisters (Martha Stewart and a certain ex). Love is about choice and freedom and happiness and empowerment. If you're lucky enough to find someone who is your "kindred spirit", why does it matter so damned much what the packaging is? They always say that two minds are better than one...why not two minds and two uteruses? I'm getting off track here...my point is just that it's hard to be true to yourself, take care of yourself and find love all in one lifetime, and that's just what Elspeth Cameron's *No Previous Experience* is all about. It's an easy and uplifting read, and it ends just as good (better I think) than it starts. Besides being totally true, the kick-ass epigraph sets the tone for the whole book, and was good enough to make it into my diary:

"We all have a homosexual who is asleep within us. There are some who wake up, and others who do not. This could happen to anyone and everyone. It takes the right place, with the right moment, with the right person."



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## Blah blah blah, girl powah

by nicole verkerk

What can I say about Spice World, a little gem of a film starring four\* of the most talented women on the face of the planet today? I was lucky enough to attend opening night of the film. The theatre had the energy of a teenage apocalypse. I staggered in on these godawful borrowed platform shoes, 'cause I was trying to be spicy, and was forced to recognize that the spice girls are even more talented than I first realized: they dance in the dang things. So the movie is generally one long music video for the girls, they sing all their songs and "act", demonstrating that they actually do only have one personality trait each. That's right, Sporty, Ginger, Posh, Baby and Scary are five of the most boring gals you could ever hope to meet. Luckily, they have those accents which instantly renders everything they say irresistibly interesting.

I have had passion for all that is Spice from the begining. Thus this movie was right up my alley. Imagine, if you will, a whole audience of adolescence singing along to "Spice up your life". Could it get any better?

I think there was a plot to this movie. Some Roger Moore tabloid type of scandalous deal, and aliens, with Meatloaf as the bus driver and Elvis Costello playing a bartender. It really doesn't matter though does it. Spice is an experience. Something we should all live and breath every single day. Of course, never forgetting the political message contained within: "If you wanna change the world, spice up your life." Oh, I will...

\*Alright already. I know that there are five Spice Girls, but for the love of god, I hate Posh. She is the least talented, most unbearably snotty thing to have ever had a taste of fame. What is her personality trait anyway, rich bitch? Now there's something for the kids to aspire to. And she hardly sings, and when she does it sucks, in the wannabe video she just dances (badly) with a wine glass, and she never smiles, and I hate her, I hate her, I hate her. Now I hate Baby too, but that is more of a mixed love/hate thing. Obviously I love Ginger/Sexy spice and Sporty cause of her gold tooth, and well I don't really care about Scary. And anyway Posh sucks.



When she was younger she was told music was "a nice hobby, dear, but you have to work for a living!" She held onto her day job during her 20s, which she figures is an ideal age for women to get started in the music business, and had two kids. There's not much space available for "older women's" music; "no one knows it's out there". She says she wouldn't be moving towards making a living from her music if her partner, Michael, wasn't supportive both in words and actions. For now, he pays most of their bills, so she has "the luxury of picking and choosing gigs." Playing in pubs, she says, was a mistake. It was depressing playing three nights in the same smoky bar to the same slumped figures. Bad experiences with potential managers (one wanted to pair her with a man and another just talked about a well-known client) undermined her confidence. Now she does much of her own promotion through the Internet.

The songs on Irene's CD, "Motor Scooter", deal with events from her own life: love, infatuation, fear, hope and death. She tells stories in her songs, as she does in life, laughing through short clear tales. Even her darkest songs are somehow upbeat, without ripping off her subject. She describes Joni Mitchell's ideas about pathos in songwriting - that it's more like life when happy and sad come together.

Irene has performed a lot since "Motor Scooter" came out last year. "You can't just make a CD and then not do anything with it." She moved through a phase of stage fright by "just doing it... the less you perform, the more it builds". Fear, suggested a friend, comes from denying part of yourself - a showy part that gets squished when kids are told to be quiet. Instead of pushing fear away, this friend advised, access it, get into it, "roar like a lion". In 1993, at a folk club gig after her first tape came out, Irene was terrified. She found a back door, checked that she was alone and roared into the night, then started laughing, and went on to give a good performance. "It unleashed something... I was still nervous, but calm and present... Fear and excitement are the same feeling, just interpreted differently." Ritual baths help to calm her on performance nights, and she's learned to forgive herself when she makes mistakes, fumbling her way past blanks and letting it go.

The best thing about performing? "Looking out and finding that one person who's really grooving - If I'm desperate I'll look for a toe tap!"

"Motor Scooter" is available for listening at A&B Sound. Visit Irene's homepage at <http://www.islandnet.com/~woloshen/ijackson.html> to find songwriting tips.



# i'm watching you.

by lyndsay



i'm watching you, you and your little hot  
toddy. you and your little devilish ways,  
you little devil. you're the king of  
candyland, you're the frog in my throat.  
chocolate cupcakes, frosting and white  
whipped  
filling. you are the junk food in my diet,  
the noise when it is quiet on a sunday  
morning. i like to study your little move-  
ments, the moment when something moves  
beyond acquaintance into something more  
comfortable or even awkward. i like to  
look at you and think about what i would  
change, because i'm like that. i like to  
think about what it would be like to wake  
up beside you, when you're still asleep,  
and it's raining and really nice and dark  
outside. i wanna play my favorite songs  
for you. i'm watching you, you little  
toddy. not like an evil watching like i'm  
gonna murder you or something. quite the  
opposite. but it's fun to like scare you  
too. cause i'm like, into you, you know?



i am your active  
audience.